Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Please cancel claims 10-24 without waiver or prejudice.

1.   (Original) A method for fabricating a taper, comprising:

disposing a semiconductor waveguide on a substrate;

forming a protective layer on the semiconductor waveguide;

removing a portion of the protective layer to expose a portion of the semiconductor waveguide, the exposed portion of the semiconductor waveguide defining a footprint of the taper; and

forming a semiconductor layer on the exposed portion of the semiconductor waveguide to form the taper, the taper having a termination end and a longitudinal axis, wherein the termination end has at least one unetched surface that is angled relative to the longitudinal axis.

2.   (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the semiconductor waveguide is formed using a silicon on insulator (SOI) wafer.

3.   (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the protective layer comprises an oxide.

4.   (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the semiconductor layer is formed using a selective silicon epitaxy process.

5.   (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein the semiconductor layer is formed into the taper without etching the semiconductor layer.

6.   (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein the semiconductor layer has a sloped upper surface.

7.   (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein the sloped upper surface is formed without etching the semiconductor layer.

8.   (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein forming the semiconductor layer comprises depositing semiconductor material on the protective layer and the exposed portion of the semiconductor waveguide, followed by chemical mechanical polishing to expose the protective layer.

9.   (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein a insulator layer is disposed beneath the semiconductor waveguide.

Claims 10-24 (Cancelled).